

Telephone interview with former corpsman HM3 Glen C. Snowden, Co. A, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division. Wounded in action, Korea. Conducted by Jan K. Herman, Historian, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, 26 October 2000.

What do you remember about October 5th, 1951, the day you and a whole bunch of other people got pretty badly hurt?

I'll tell you what happened. We tried to take a hill to get the enemy off the top of it.

Do you remember a guy named Fenwick who was very badly wounded that day? He was hit in the stomach. He remembers you trying to drag him out of the line of fire while the North Koreans were shooting at the both of you. He also recalls that you were shot in the arm and tumbled down the hill. But that you got right back up again and dragged him the rest of the way to safety.

I remember that. I had to get him up over the hill because he had slid down on the enemy side. If we stayed there we'd both be shot. So I grabbed him by the ankles and told him, "Put your arms on your stomach and hold them down real good." And then I said, "I'm gonna pull you up." He said, "No. I don't think I can make it." And I told him, "You're gonna make it because I'm going to start pullin' right now." I tied his hands together and put both my hands underneath his armpits as far as I could. Then I got his head up on my chest, and started moving. I wanted his head up high where I could see whether he was breathing or not. You don't want [your patient] to bleed from the mouth. If they do, they can choke. And that's the way I pulled him back up. The only thing that stayed on the ground as I pulled him were his heels.

And you were already wounded yourself at the time.

Oh, yeah, but I wasn't bleeding. I had already plugged that up. I put a peg in it.

You did what?

I pegged it.

What do you mean you pegged it?

I'd take a limb or something and take my knife and kind of smooth it. Then I'd break it off. I'd make a couple of them and put them in my pocket. Then if I got shot, I'd just stick one in the wound real fast.

Like a cork?

Yes. And it wouldn't bleed. You'd be surprised how that worked.

I've never heard of that before.

So I got him up there [on the back side of the hill], and the first thing I had to do was bandage him. I tore his shirt in the back where the bullets had come out and patched him up there. I put a great big [battle dressing] on him and tied it as tight as I could get it. And then I turned him over and patched up his stomach. That's when the corpsmen started yelling that they had a vacant litter. We grabbed him underneath the arms and put him on that litter and they took off. I yelled, "Good bye. You're goin' back to the states. I wish you all the luck in the world. I know you're goin' to make it back, so take it easy." And he waved at me.

Did you ever find out what happened to him after he left?

I never found out. I called after I got back down to the base but they must already have taken him. I guess they put him right on that hospital ship.

When I called you yesterday and told you I had talked to Mr. Fenwick, and he was very happy you had saved his life, was that the first time you even knew he was still alive?

Yes. That's the first time. As long as I was over in Korea, nobody would send any information through on the radio telling me what happened to him.

Well, Mr. Fenwick is okay thanks to you and wants to say thank you.

I appreciate what he said. I guess I probably saved quite a few lives over there, but I sure put everything in it when I saved him.

HM3 Snowden eventually lost his left arm due to wounds suffered that day.